

(b) and (c). In consonance with the policy to make optimal use of the national industrial infrastructure a number of low-technology and low-value added items were identified for off-loading to the civil sector in a phased manner. 17 clothing items were also identified for off-loading in phase I. A reversal of this decision is not presently contemplated.

[English]

Augmentation of Size of Merchant Fleet

2856. SHRI CHITTA BASU: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to augment the size of the countries merchant fleet to reduce pressure on foreign exchange; and

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This Ministry have taken a number of steps to assist Indian Shipping Companies. These include:—

(a) Streamlining of licensing procedures which has enabled quicker ship acquisition in the fluctuating International Market.

(b) Revised age norms for acquisition of second-hand vessels;

(c) Permitting Shipowners to acquire bulk carriers of 10–30,000 DWT without approaching the Ship Acquisition Licensing Committee;

(d) Proposals for replacement of existing tonnage will not be placed before the

Ship Acquisition Licensing Committee, if the replacement proposal is within 25% in excess of or less than the tonnage to be replaced.

(e) Permitting Private Shipping Companies to place orders on Indian shipyards without reference to assessed requirements.

(f) Simplification of procedure for charter out of vessels by shipping companies.

Exports and Imports

2857. SHRI R. DHANUSKODI ATHITHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the value of export and import targeted for the current financial year and the percentage of these to the Gross Domestic Production;

(b) the actual performance during this year so far;

(c) whether the Exim scrips have been found advantageous for encouraging exports; and

(d) if so, in what manner?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The export target for the fiscal year 1991–92 was not fixed, in view of the uncertainties in the global trading environment, collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union, a major trading partner of India, and the time lag for the far reaching policy reforms to have full impact on exports. No targets are fixed for imports.

(b) India's exports to General Currency area (GCA) countries amounted to Rs. 27133 crores during April–December, 1991 as compared to Rs. 18785 crores during April–December, 1990, thereby registering

an increase of 44.4%. In dollar terms, GCA exports increased by 6.3%. India's exports to Rupee Payment Area (RPA) amounted to Rs. 3199 crores during April–December, 1991 as compared to Rs. 4404 crores during April–December, 1990, thereby registering a decline of 27.4%. In dollar terms, RPA exports declined by 46.5%. India's imports during April–December, 1991 amounted to Rs. 34238 crores, as compared to Rs. 31724 crores during April–December, 1990, thereby registering an increase of 7.9%. In dollar terms, the import declined by 20.5%.

(c) and (d). Eximscrip scheme has been found advantageous to exports in view of built-in-incentives for exporters in terms of premium in the domestic market. This scheme has since been enlarged and replaced by the Liberalised Exchange Rate Management Systems (LERMS), which provides for partial convertibility of Rupee.

Convertibility of Rupee

2858. SHRI ANAND RATNA MAURYA:
SHRI M. RAMANNA RAI.

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have plan to make the Indian rupee convertible to foreign currencies; and

(b) if so, by when and its effect on the economy of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b). The Government introduced a system of partial convertibility of the Rupee effective March 1, 1992 as announced in the Union Budget for 1992–93 by the Finance Minister. The New

system expands the past eximscrip system to the entire current account receipts including workers' remittances, achieves considerably simplification of the trade system, gives a powerful boost to exports and efficient import substitutions, reduces incentive to illegal foreign exchange transactions and introduces a self-balancing mechanism thereby making the management of the balance of payments easy.

[Translation]

Foreign Assistance to Projects in Orissa

2859. SHRI SRIKANTA JENA:
SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAYAK:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any proposal to establish new projects in Orissa with foreign assistance;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the total amount incurred on the existing projects with foreign assistance in the State;

(d) whether some of such projects have suffered due to non-availability of funds?

(e) if so, the names of such projects; and

(f) the steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) to (f). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.